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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 PM-07 AID-20 MC-02 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 EB-11 OMB-01 IGA-02 COME-00

TRSE-00 DRC-01 /093 W
---------- 050124
R 101015Z SEP 73
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3764
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
SECDEF WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHIIEN

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 6395

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS UK IR
SUBJECT: MILITARY SALES TO IRAN - EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION
WITH BRITISH

REF: A. TEHRAN 5240
B. TEHRAN 5571
C. LONDON 9632
D. STATE 168060

SUMMARY: WHILE WE DO NOT BELIEVE WE SHOULD EMBARK ON ANY REGULAR PROGRAM WITH HMG FOR EXCHANGING INFO ON DEFENSE CONTRACTS WITH IRAN, WE RECOMMEND THAT WE HOLD AD HOC DISCUSSIONS OF SPECIFIC CASES AND SITUATIONS AS REQUIRED. END SUMMARY.

1. FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE, FOLLOWINF CONSIDERATIONS ARGUE AGAINST UNDERTAKING EXCHANGE OF INFO ON SIGNED ARMS CONTRACTS WITH BRITISH:

A. WE DOUBT WE WOULD RECEIVE MUCH USEFUL INFO ON BRITISH SALES TO IRAN THAT IS NOT ALREADY AVAILABLE TO US THROUGH MAAG IIA CONTACTS AND DAO CHANNELS. FOR EXAMPLE, WE
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FOLLOWED GYRATIONS OF SCORPION TANK SALE FOR MONTHS AND

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WERE INFORMED SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE ELLINGWORTH ANNOUNCEMENT (TEHRAN 5240) THAT FINAL DEAL COULD BE EXPECTED SHORTLY.

B. BRITISH TRAINING UNITS WITH IIA (CHIEFTAIN TANKS, RAPIER MISSILES, NAVY SPECIAL FORCES) ARE VIRTUALLY SELF-CONTAINED AND REQUIRE LITTLE OR NO INTEREACTION OR COORDINATION WITH MAAG ADVISORS. WE KNOW OF NO SERIOUS US-UK PROBLEMS AS MENTIONED BY ELLINGWORTH, AND WE DOUBT INFOR PROPOSED BY HIM WOULD PROVE OF SIGNIFICANT UTILITY TO MAAG STAFF.

C. FOR SOME TIME WE HAVE SENSED BRITISH DESIRE TO ELEVATE THEIR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PRESENCE WITH IIA TO PARITY STATUS WITH MAAG. INFO EXCHANGE PROPOSAL COULD BE VIEWED AS MOVE TO GIVE INCREASED PRESTIGE TO SMALL BRITISH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EFFORT.

D. THERE IS REAL DANGER THAT REGULAR EXCHANGES WOULD BECOME KNOWN TO GOI OR BRITISH OR AMERICAN FIRMS AND BE VERY DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN.

2. FOLLOWING FACTORS WEIGH ON POSITIVE SIDE:

A. IRAN HAS BEEN SOMETHING OF A SENSITIVE POINT IN USG-HMG RELATIONS AND IT WOULD PROBABLY SERVE OUR OVERALL RELATION-SHIP WITH BRITS TO ENHANCE COOPERATION AND REDUCE SUSPICIONS HERE.

B. BRITS OAVE VALUABLELEXPERIENCE AND CONTACTS IN IRAN AND THISEREGION. INFO EXCHANGE COULD HELP IMPROVE ACCESS TO BRIT EXPERTISE AND SOURCES.

C. INFO BRITS WOULD SEEK FROM US IS GENERALLY AVAILABLE IN DUE COURSE FROM DEFENSE FIRMS, PT
DTDMR OTHER SOURCES HERELAND
IN US. NOTHIPG WE WOULD RELEASO IQLTSOTSERSELY AFFECT USH DOQURITY ITOET
TNTDOYHCOMMERCIAL SALOS.

3. ON BALANCE, WE CONCLUOE THAT EXCHANGE PROPOSED OYLBTWTOH WOULD NOT SUBSTANTITLP BENEFITLEWTHER SIDE IN ANY TANGIBLETH CONFIDENTIAL

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OR CONSIS
TENT MANNER. CLEARLY, HMG WMULD STAND TO GAIN
FAR MORE THAN WE WOULD. ON OTHER HAND, RISK THAT WORD OF PROGRAM WOULD FILTER OUT TO IRANIANS OR COMMERCIAL FIRMS AND BE MISUNDERSTOOD BY THEM IS VERY GREAT, AND HOLDS POTENTIAL FOR GREAT DAMAGE. ACCORDINGLY, WE PROPOSE REPLY TO BRITISH BE FORMULATED ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

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A. WE DOUBT THAT INFO ON SIGNED DEFENSE CONTRACTS WOULD BE
OF VERY SUBSTANTIAL UTILITY TO EITHER USG OR HMG. FACTS
OF SUCH CONTRACTS ARE GENERALLY AVAILABLE TO INTERESTED
PARTIES ON TEHRAN MILITARY CIRCUIT.

B. SHOULD IT BECOME KNOWN TO GOI OR COMMERCIAL FIRMS THAT
WE HAD ESTABLISHED PROGRAM OF INFO EXCHANGES, BOTH USG
AND HMG WOULD BE IN FOR SERIOUS TROUBLE. WE WOULD HAVE
DIFFICULT TIME EXPLAINING AWAY EXAGGERATED MISUNDERSTANDINGS
AND SPECULATIONS THAT WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE ATTACHED
TO BARE FACTS OF EXCHANGE.

C. HOWEVER, WE WOULD WELCOME OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS SPECIFIC
DEFENSE PROJECTS IN IRAN WHEN REQUIREMENT IS PERCEIVED BY
EITHER SIDE. ON OCCASION, FOR EXAMPLE, IT MIGHT BE USEFUL
FOR MAAG TO KNOW OF HMG PLANNING FOR TECHNICAL SUPPORT
FOR A WEAPONS SYSTEM IT HAD SOLD TO IRAN, AND WE COULD PUT
THAT QUESTION TO BRITISH EMBASSY HERE. WE DO NOT FEEL SUCH
AD HOC ARRANGEMENTS NEED BE LIMITED TO SIGNED DEFENSE
CONTRACTS, BUT COULD COVER THIRD COUNTRY PROJECTS AS WELL.
EXCHANGES ON, SAY, SOVIET AID TO IRAN WOULD BE HELPFUL.
AND, AS WE HAVE IN PAST, WE WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE COMPARE
NOTES WITH BRITS AS TO WHAT MILITARY ASSISTANCE IRANIANS
ARE PROVIDING TO OTHER REGIONAL COUNTRIES. WE BELIEVE
SUCH OCCASIONAL EXCHANGES COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED
WITHOUT DANGER OF COMPROMISE.
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